

## TECHNICAL SUMMARY

**Study Title:** Atlantic Wind Energy Workshop Summary Report

**Report Title:** Atlantic Wind Energy Workshop Meeting Report

**Contract Number:** GS-07F-0591W

**Sponsoring OCS Region:** Headquarters– Office of Alternative Energy Program

**Applicable Planning Areas:** Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf

**Completion Date of Report:** August 2011

**Costs:** \$219,257

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**Key Words:** alternative energy, offshore wind, offshore renewable energy, socioeconomics, offshore energy technology, environmental data, birds, bats

**Background:** The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation, and Enforcement (BOEMRE) is a bureau under the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) that manages the nation's natural gas, oil, and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). In managing the offshore oil and gas resources, Offshore Energy and Minerals Management (OEMM) conducts environmental studies, issues leases, and regulates operations conducted on the OCS. The regulatory responsibilities include issuing permits for oil and gas exploration, development, and production and inspecting operations during all of these activities. BOEMRE manages the offshore mineral resources in concert with other Federal, State, and local agencies and in consultation with the public. The November 23, 2010, launching of the Secretary of Interior's "Smart from the Start" wind energy initiative for the Atlantic OCS is aimed at facilitating the prioritization, rapid siting, and leasing of new projects. This workshop provided information to assist BOEMRE in the environmental review of wind energy areas and in the evaluation of sites for new offshore projects. A total of 172 people attended the workshop, including Federal and State agency staff that provided a summary of their agencies' regulatory role in the wind energy development process as well as numerous experts and project leaders that reported on completed and ongoing studies relevant to the development of offshore wind projects. The attendees participated in the workshop plenary and breakout sessions and were tasked to identify data gaps and develop partnerships for future studies.

**Objectives:** As part of the Secretary of the Interior's "Smart from the Start" wind energy initiative to spur renewable energy development on the OCS, this workshop provided information to assist BOEMRE and its Federal partners in environmental and technical reviews

of wind energy areas and in the evaluation of new projects. Additionally, this workshop was part of the DOI-Department of Energy (DOE), Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) process to coordinate environmental monitoring and baseline studies in support of environmental assessment and consultations for siting and leasing in the Atlantic wind energy areas.

Specific goals of the workshop included (1) providing an update of recent and ongoing environmental and social sciences research conducted since the Worldwide Synthesis and Analysis of Existing Information Regarding Environmental Effects of Alternative Energy Uses on the Outer Continental Shelf workshop in 2007 and BOEMRE technology and safety studies on renewable energy; (2) identifying key data needs and prioritize research gaps; and (3) developing partnerships and identifying potential synergies for future studies.

**Description:** The workshop began with a presentation by the Director Bromwich that touched on the role of offshore renewable energy development in the Administration's Blueprint for a Secure Energy Future, and explained how the bureau's Offshore Renewable Energy Program is being elevated through the overall reorganization of the former Minerals Management Service. Federal agencies then provided program updates, their respective legal mandates, and how they are coordinating with each other to increase efficiency and reduce duplication. The presentations provided a background for the later discussions in the breakout sessions. These breakout sessions consisted of: 1) Environmental; 2) Technology Assessment and Resource (TA&R); 3) Social-Economics; and 4) Birds, Bats and Offshore Wind Development. The four breakout sessions took different approaches to the panel discussions and development of identifying data needs. The Environmental; TA&R; and Birds, Bats and Offshore Wind Development sessions included technical presentations by experts that identified and discussed recent and ongoing studies and research, trends in technology, existing guidelines and standards, and existing resources available regarding the offshore wind energy program. In contrast, the Social-Economics sessions took a collaborative approach to the panel discussions that included Cultural and Historic Resources; Multi-Use Issues/Space-Use Conflicts; Public Perception, Legal Studies, Visual Impacts, and Tourism; and Economic Impact, Regulatory, Policy, Stakeholder Issues, and Infrastructure.

Although the breakout sessions developed different data needs, one primary common theme was identified by all four sessions: establishing guidelines and standards for the wind energy industry in the U.S. The needs for guidelines and standards were different for each breakout session, but the common theme persisted. The sessions identified that the types of guidelines and standards needed included: the determination of quality and quantity data sufficiency; establishment of impact thresholds for specific critical species; establishment of a structured decision making process; identification of resources; collection of baseline and monitoring data; interpretation of data; design, safety, and installation; and for the required reports and plans.

The Atlantic Wind Energy Workshop Meeting Report provides a summary of the workshop activities and results. The Report is also a resource for the permitting process and regulatory framework of the offshore wind energy program and includes a listing and summary of Federal and State agency missions and mandates. This summary includes Federal and State agencies' involvement from cradle to grave in the development, siting, construction, operation, and decommissioning of Wind Energy projects on the Atlantic OCS and all affected areas and includes links and contacts for further information, including applicable laws and rules.

**Study Products:** Cahill, M., K. Olsen, D. Blaha, J. Tims, A. Finio, M. Todorov, J. Ewald, J. Primo, L. Medley, D. Bigger, K. Skrupky, and B. Hooker. Atlantic Wind Energy Workshop Summary Report. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation, and Enforcement. Herndon, VA. OCS Study BOEMRE 049-2011. 78 pp. + apps.